

COLOMBIA

SECTOR:	Modernization of the State
PROJECT NAME:	Modernization of the Congress of Colombia (1179/OC-CO)
TOTAL COST:	\$10 million
FINANCING:	
IDB	\$ 6 million
LOCAL	\$ 4 million
DATE OF APPROVAL:	May 12, 1999

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: This Technical Cooperation (TC) loan aims to help the Congress of the Republic of Colombia design and carry out a modernization and institution-building

program. It will provide funding primarily for the hiring of consultants and purchase of equipment necessary to carry out seven components: (a) review of current parliamentary rules and procedures and assessment of the existing technical assistance, staffing and information systems; (b) placement in operation of the new organizational structure and implementation of Congress= new parliamentary rules and procedures; (c) establishment of a new in-house system for the provision of specialized advisory services; (d) reorganization and reinforcement of congressional administration; (e) preparation of a master plan for computerization; (f) creation of a congressional documentation center; and (g) improvement of the links between Congress and Colombian society. The project will be carried out in two stages, involving the passage and implementation of the new Law No. 5a, which sets out new regulations for Congress and its organizational structures, including the respective materials (computer systems) and human resources (technical staff).

The first component consists of: (a) thorough review of the current rules and procedures; (b) assessment of the current status of the institution=s specialized technical assistance services; (c) analysis of its present personnel roster; and (d) a study of Congress=computer local area network (LAN). The second component provides specialized outside assistance to support the introduction of the legislative reforms, help overcome complications, and ensure that the changes are consolidated and permanent. The third component: (a) upgrades and provides training for current advisory staff; (b) defines the type of advisory staff needed by Congress in the future, based on merit, ability, professional qualifications and impartiality; and (c) seeks to reach agreements with Colombian or foreign universities or parliamentary bodies abroad to create advanced courses in relevant topics, while the Colombian Congress develops a practical training program in-house. The fourth component, administrative reform, will consist of: (a) final design of the resolutions and agreements for the development of regulations in the area of administrative organization; (b) professional development, adaptation and restructuring of personnel to the new procedures; and (c) direct support for legislative members, both individually and in groups or caucuses, in the form of the material means and human resources they require to carry out their duties. The fifth component, an information systems master plan, will provide Congress with the computer infrastructure to support current and future activities. The sixth component will support the design and implementation of modern information systems for use by legislators, congressional support personnel, and members of the public, including creation of operational units for library, documentation and archival services. The seventh component funds: (a) explaining the modernization process to the public; (b) improving means for publicizing the work of Congress; and (c) formalizing public access to information about Congress and its members.

CONSULTANTS: Consultants will be hired to make up the Project Executing Unit (PEU), which will coordinate and monitor all of the components, and maintain close ties with the Speakers of both the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. The PEU will consist of a project head (international consultant - 36 months), an administrative coordinator (36 months), an expert in organizational methods and human resources (36 months), an expert in computer/information systems (18 months), and a financial analyst (36 months), as well as a secretary (36 months). The TC also covers the cost of round-trip transportation for the project head and his/her family to and from their country of origin, as well as installation costs in Bogotá.

For component one, a team of three consultants (one international and two local) will be contracted to carry out a review of parliamentary rules and procedures for a total of 12 person-months. These individuals must have international experience in the organizing and operations of modern legislatures, so that they can: (a) provide technical advice, write reports and draft

documents as required; (b) help explain and assist in the assimilation of the changes and the development of a general consensus on their content and usefulness; (c) help ensure technical consistency between the legislative and regulatory reforms, on the one hand, and the proposed constitutional amendment, on the other; and (d) cooperate with executive bodies on the modernization process to facilitate later implementation. One consulting firm will be hired to help with the personnel roster; a second will be hired to analyze, design and implement a LAN for Congress.

Carrying out the second component requires contracting the services of a team of three local experts or a specialized firm, for a total of 72 man-months, to provide day-to-day assistance with managing the Office of the Speaker, the Executive Committee, and possibly the Council of Floor Leaders or Spokespersons, as well as with the administrative duties of the committee chairs. They will also help the new administrative departments get a firm grip on the new procedures. It is thought advisable for the consultants to help draft a manual of parliamentary procedures so that knowledge of the changes and a detailed description of the various formalities are available.

The third component requires the hiring of a local consultant for four person-months to implement the system of technical advisory services outlined above for this component and prepare the final version of invitations to bid to be used in the recruitment of advisory staff and of bids to be let to universities and other countries after passage of the new rules of procedure.

The fourth component provides for the hiring of a consulting firm for seven months to provide new organization and procedure manuals as well as technical assistance in implementing the administrative reforms. The firm will deliver the final versions of the proposed new rules and organization and procedure manuals to the PEU one month after passage. The proposal will also include a plan for implementation over a seven month period.

The fifth component requires hiring three consulting firms to: (a) install the LAN; (b) computerize the parliamentary and administrative systems; and (c) provide training. The consultants will also collaborate with the Working Groups under components six and seven to help create a congressional documentation center and improve the links between Congress and Colombian society.

For the sixth component, a local consultant will be hired for 18 months to create a congressional documentation center, as well as train personnel.

For the seventh component, linking Congress and Colombian society, a local consultant will be hired for 12 months to: (a) through workshops and seminars, maintain contacts with community groups and encourage their participation in Congressional modernization; (b) create a working group made up of staff from the press and information offices, whose task will be to define the objectives and determine the human resource and infrastructure requirements for optimizing the operation of these offices in both houses; and (c) design the best channels for citizens to have access to Congress in order to communicate relevant data and submit proposals or requests, and then implement this design.

A consultant will also be contracted to perform a final evaluation. A firm of external auditors acceptable to the Bank shall audit annual financial statements of the TC. Consultants will also play a role in Citizens= Watch programs.

GOODS AND EQUIPMENT: Goods and equipment will be procured, including computer systems and access to international databases.

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